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# Proposed Code of Ethics of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers

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## Proposed Code of Ethics of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

*To the Editor of Metallurgical & Chemical Engineering:*

Sir: I enclose an "Open Letter" to those who would impose a "Code of Ethics" on the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Since the question at issue is of general interest, you may find it expedient to publish these views.

Dear Sirs: The fact that other engineering societies have adopted a "Code of Ethics" is not a satisfactory reason why the Institute of Chemical Engineers should adopt one. They may have made a bad mistake in adopting a code, and it would then be no credit to us to follow their example. Let us make our own mistakes, if we are going to make any, and not simply repeat the mistakes of others.

The Institute of Chemical Engineers was intended to be select, to contain only men of prominence and accomplishment in their profession. Its foundation was partly a protest against the indiscriminate character of the membership of the American Chemical Society, and because membership in that society conferred no distinction. Such being the high character of the membership of the Institute, it is unfitting and ill-advised to formulate "rules of conduct" for them, as if they were tyros in the art of being "an honest man and a gentleman."

The adoption of such a code would distinctly lower the dignity and distinction of membership in the Institute. It is, by assumption, unnecessary, because we elect as members only men who by action and achievement have shown themselves to be distinguished gentlemen. To prescribe to such, for example, that they shall "be guided by the highest principles of honor," is as unnecessary as it is silly and ridiculous; indeed, it is a gratuitous insult to every member of the Institute.

I do not hesitate to say, that if any member of the Institute has lost self-respect to such extent that he feels that he, himself, needs such a prescription as that just quoted, to keep him in the path of honor and rectitude, then he should be thoughtful enough to resign from the Institute before he brings discredit upon it. The Institute is not a reformatory.

Neither do I hesitate to say that any member who recognizes that he himself does not need such a prescription, but still would impose it on the Institute "for the benefit of his weaker brothers," is an unmitigated cad, and unfit to direct or influence the proceedings of the Institute.

I sincerely hope that the whole proposition will be voted "down and out" for good; every member who votes for it stultifies himself.

JOS. W. RICHARDS.

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